

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising a private dialing plan for communication of packetized voice on a packet-based network involving a network gateway, wherein:

on-network access to the plan gateway is accomplished by using a multi-part access sequence consisting of a leading "0," followed by the caller's conventional telephone number or other telephone number registered with the plan, followed by a multiple digit user PIN number;

off-network access to the plan is provided through telephone dial-up access to a gateway using the public telephone switching system;

calls to on-network IP addresses are placed by dialing or keying a sequence consisting of a leading "0," followed by the telephone number registered with the plan for that user IP address; and

calls to off-net conventional telephones are placed by dialing a "1," followed by the telephone number to be called.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein a signaling protocol such as Q.931 is used to establish, maintain and release switched connections over the network.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein database search keys based on member registered conventional telephone numbers are used to access various plan database information, such as the IP address corresponding with the called number and any optional services or features available for that member.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the gatekeeper determines which is the optimum way to route on-net calls.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein calls originate on the Internet and terminate off-net, and the gatekeeper routing tables determine the least cost route to terminate the call.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein optional services are available for PC-to-PC calls, including:

forward unconditional;

forward on busy;

forward on no answer;

forward on no response;

callwaiting;

Blind transfer; and

consultative transfer.